

Prime Minister Challenges Critics to Show Any Instance of Political Interference With Hydro Affairs—Affirms Every Contract Entered Will Be Justified—Hits Back at Critics

BELLIGERENT TONE MARKS ADDRESS

Colonel Carmichael Is Referred to in Terms of Criticism — Attacks on Beck Recalled—Present Commissioners Praised and Raising of Suspicions Deprecated

Challenging any one to name an instance in which there had been any political interference with Hydro administration; vigorously defending the work and worth of the Provincial Power Commission and its several members; throwing out the warning that public ownership in this Province is doomed to die if continually fed upon suspicions by those who are opposed to it; and emphatically reiterating his claim that the \$125,000 Beauharnois-Aird payment has "nothing to do with Hydro"; Premier George S. Henry met the Opposition attack in the Legislature yesterday, with a rip-roaring, slash-and-bang counter-assault that indubitably spells the end of any attempt to have the present scope of the Royal Commission Hydro inquiry enlarged beyond the Madawaska-Aird payment and the Dominion Power and Transmission Company deal.

Termed "Fishing Expedition."

Dubbing the demands of the Sinclair-McQuibban amendment "a fishing expedition, pure and simple," the Prime Minister declared, that no such fishing expedition would be tolerated; that, on the other hand, the Government would give the Opposition "the time of their lives in the House," and would expect them to come forward and repeat all they had been saying about Hydro affairs "on the hustings."

"We will justify every contract entered into with regard to Hydro to take care of the needs of the people of this Province," he pledged. "My concern is for Hydro. I live it in my life and actions, which is more than can be said for those across the way and of their Leader who is outside."

Mr. Henry charged, amid Conservative enthusiasm, that the effort "to get the Hydro Commission" which had persisted all through the life of Beck, even obtained at the present time; pledged himself before he was through with the debate to show "how closely the Opposition is identified with it," and severely arraigned Messrs. Sinclair and Nixon for their critical references to Messrs. Cooke, Maguire and Meighen, the present Hydro Commissioners.

Commissioners Commended.

"They are men of ability, of good repute and known to have a grasp of the power situation," said the Premier, "and yet you say we ought to examine every contract made in the last few years. If we cannot have faith and confidence in the men we appoint to these positions who will we get to serve? No business is ever carried on by advertising everything you do in the marketplace. It never can be. If we cannot have confidence in the men that we appoint to our Commission without all their affairs having to be continually investigated, no man with any standing would ever take a position from us at all."

With a belligerent attitude, quite foreign to his platform campaigning, except on rare occasions, the Prime Minister flung challenges and wagers around him with abandon, and, by way of direct reply to Hon. Mr. Nixon's demand for all Hydro contracts in pamphlet form ("So that we can study them and debate them here"), he snapped out the information that the Opposition would have the opportunity, he hoped, to debate the \$50,000 Aird-Madawaska payment (now before the Royal Commission and sub-judice as far as the Legislature is concerned) before the present session ended, inasmuch as he had asked the Commissioner to so hurry up his report on that point as to permit its presentation to the House.

Thrust at The Globe.

Few critics of Hydro—as he termed them—escaped the impaling pin of the Premier's attack. The Globe—which he termed "the little old lady of Melinda Street"—was, like Lady Macbeth, "walking in her sleep" on the Hydro situation. Going back as far as the Drury Government days, he charged that Colonel Dougal Carmichael had been put on the Hydro

Commission because he was "a political hack" and in spite of the fact that he knew nothing of Hydro. Controller Ramsden had been put there for practically the same purpose—to thwart the views of Sir Adam Beck.

"And then," said he, with a significant wave of his hand at Mr. Nixon, "you dare to talk of the political aspect of the Hydro Commission as at present constituted."

The Premier will continue his speech tomorrow when the debate is resumed.

Premier Henry Speaks.

Coming to the question of Hydro, Premier Henry said: "There has been through all the history of Hydro operation for the last twenty-five years or better on the part of the Liberals who are in this House—Liberals who are throughout the Province—an effort put up to make it appear to the public generally that there was something sinister about the situation; that it was political; that we had private members of the Government sitting on the Commission, and that it was generally a political machine.

"My honorable friend criticizes the Chairman of the Commission—a man who, while he has a seat in the House, is a supporter of this Government, a member of the Government, and has been known as a Conservative from his own county during twenty-odd years, practically every time returned by acclamation because he is so highly respected. The citizens recognize in him a man of outstanding ability and one they are proud to have as their representative.

"It is twelve years since I sat in the left-hand corner of this House, in the closing hours of the session—twelve years ago, in 1920—nominated him as a member of the committee to study the development of Hydro, and from that time forward he has been a consistent student of Hydro in all its work.

Appointment Defended.

"When we came into office in 1923, it was the logical thing for him to be placed on the board as Government representative on the Commission. It is true, Sir Adam Beck continued with us, but it was known even at that time that his powers were waning and that he had given pretty well all of himself during his active years as Chairman of the Commission and that it was necessary to have some one else coming along as a student of Hydro, sitting with the Government and advising as to the work that was being carried on by the Commission. Then, who more fitting than Mr. Magrath, who served for five years, served for longer than he had undertaken at the start, a man of outstanding ability, a man with a national reputation, a man of experience in handling big affairs? It was logical he be asked to carry on as long as he would. On retirement Mr. Cooke received the appointment."

Explaining why Mr. Maguire had held a place on the Commission, the Premier asserted: "For the reason that he has been one of the outstanding supporters of Hydro when he was a Liberal, as well as now, when he is supposed to be

friendly to the Government. He was appointed to the Commission because he was a representative of the municipality, and has been an outstanding leader and lieutenant under Sir Adam Beck during all the trying time they had to carry on with continued opposition.

Proud of Senator Meighen.

"Then I was very proud to be able to secure a man like the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, now Senator Meighen. I am satisfied that, outside politics, even among the Liberals of this Province, what they themselves have thought was, 'Henry has done a good stroke of business when he has secured Meighen for the Commission.' The less they say in criticism of Mr. Meighen the better for themselves, because the people of this Province are banked behind him as a Commissioner. When it becomes necessary, when Senator Meighen finds that his time at Ottawa prevents him serving Hydro, he will be the first man to hand in his resignation.

"There is a lot of talk about Hydro being political. What has my honorable friend to say? What happened in his own time? What did he do with the Hydro Commission when they were in office? What did Colonel Carmichael do?—a man who never heard of Hydro, sitting, it is true, with the Government, as the statute required; a man of no experience in Hydro; no training; merely put there because he was a political hack to represent the party on the Commission."

Mr. Nixon—You may say the same thing of Mr. Cooke.

"No," replied the Premier. "You may not say the same thing of Mr. Cooke, for he served for twenty years and made it his life's work. Who else did they bring in? Controller Ramsden. Was he put in because he was a Tory? Did you ever hear of him as a Tory? Why was he put there? To thwart the views of Sir Adam Beck, leader of the Commission. I may not have any authority to make this statement, but it is my conviction that the Prime Minister of the day would have discharged Sir Adam Beck if he had dared. So much for the political aspect."

Mr. Nixon—Why don't you ask him? Premier Henry—Would I get all

from you that I asked if I got you into my room? You never even come round to see me.

Mr. Nixon—I have never been invited.

Premier Henry—I have a public office and any one in this Province is welcome to come in any time.

The Premier continued: "I do not see what is wrong with Mr. Maguire making public speeches. He has been an outstanding exponent of Hydro development."

While the Premier was commenting upon the deep waterway, Mr. Sinclair made a statement to the effect that Mr. Maguire was not very strong on facts.

Premier Henry—Well, I think he knows what he is talking about. He may be misquoted like my honorable friend when he does not know it.

Raising the question of the \$125,000 paid to John Aird Jr., the Premier declared that there was no evidence that a dollar of Beauharnois money had ever reached the Conservative Party in the Province or anywhere else.

Opposition Voice — There is evidence.

The Premier—Not a word of evidence.

Says Accounting Was Given.

Mr. Henry maintained that there was proof that the particular payment of \$125,000 had been accounted for, except possibly for a matter of \$5,000.

"There is a little old lady down on Melinda Street who is very much concerned about this. I think she is very much like Lady Macbeth, walking in her sleep. I think," further asserted the speaker in referring to editorials which had been written, "that the old lady down on Melinda Street is walking in her sleep."

Government Voice—King Street.

Premier Henry—No. This is on Melinda Street.

Proceeding, he declared that the party which she (the little old lady) had supported for eighty-odd years "has gone into the Valley of Humiliation, as its Leader says."

At another juncture the Premier stated that, despite the efforts of the Ontario Government in pressing for